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John O. Green
"THE HOUSE I LIVE IN."

A GUIDE

TO THE

PRESERVATION OF HEALTH

AND THE

ATTAINMENT OF LONGEVITY;

BEING A CONDENSED TREATISE

ON THE

IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION,

AND ON THE

SUBJECT OF BATHING.

By J. W. FORD, M. D.

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P R E F A C E .

It is not my design in this essay to enter upon a professional disquisition of the science of Physiology, or to present in the following remarks, a treatise on the general laws of therapeutic agents ; but to invite the attention of the reader to the practical and efficient, though neglected means of preserving health and avoiding disease. This is emphatically an age of reform ; and praise-worthy efforts are being made by the friends of humanity, to exalt the character, to improve the morals, and to abate the sufferings of mankind by the light of physical education. And so far as these efforts relate to the subject of temperance in eating and drinking, they have been attended with all that success which might reasonably be expected from an effeminate and credulous age.

A desire to aid in this reformation, as every true philanthropist should, has prompted the writer to submit the contents of the following pages to the consideration of the public of this community.

TREATISE.

THE important science of human physiology—a science which has hitherto engaged the attention and received the investigation of only the professed physiologist, is daily developing itself to the world, and becoming, as it should be, more familiar to all classes of community.

A knowledge of the various phenomena proper to living bodies—and especially of the structure and organization of the human system—of the relationship existing between its different parts—and of the dependencies of the several organs upon each other for the regular performance of their healthy functions, has until recently, been too exclusively confined to the medical profession.

But there is manifestly a spirit of inquiry abroad in relation to these matters. The reading and reflecting portion of community are not disposed to limit their investigations, to those subjects which have heretofore formed the engrossing topics of inquiry: they wish to know something of the component parts, and of the mechanism of the human system: they are desirous

of becoming acquainted with the constituent principles of their animal and intellectual natures; and this is as it should be. Every individual, no matter how humble his capacity, ought to be made acquainted, to some extent, at least, with his physical organization, and with the laws which govern and regulate the animal economy.

The all-wise Creator has established certain fixed laws for the regulation of man's physical, as well as for his moral system—and he can no more transgress those laws with impunity in one case than he can in the other—and until a knowledge of those laws becomes more general, and their requirements are more strictly complied with, it must be expected that physical evils will exist, and that man will continue to be the subject of all “the ills that flesh is heir to,” growing as most of them do, out of his violation of these unvarying laws. Man may justly be said to be the author of his own troubles; and in a vast majority of cases he is the creator of his own diseases, whether physical, moral, or intellectual; the whole scheme of his animal economy is, arranged in harmony with the first principles of his nature, so that enjoyment flows upon the individual when his conduct is in conformity with them, and evil overtakes him when he departs from them.

Every body knows that the consequences of transgressing the moral laws of God, are moral disease and moral death—and that it is impossible for a moral and accountable being to violate those laws without sooner or later suffering their penalty. Just so in relation to those laws which nature has established for the

regulation of man's corporeal system; and his ignorance of them, and of the consequences of their infringement, in no case mitigates the penalty. Just so sure as he disregards, or violates them, just so sure must he suffer physical pain, disease, or death, according to the degree and extent of their infringement; for, notwithstanding the special interpositions of divine providence are manifest in the affairs of men, still these laws are fixed and immutable as Jehovah himself, and not one of them can ever be violated with impunity. Obedience to these laws is invariably attended with its own reward; whilst on the other hand, every violation of them carries in itself, its own punishment. Who, then, can calculate the amount of physical evil, of human suffering that has been endured, in consequence of man's inexcusable ignorance of himself and of the laws of hygiene!

Man is a speculative being; and through his desire for the marvelous, and in his eagerness to unfold mysteries, and to create new inventions, he has left almost entirely to chance, the more important business of his life. In the pursuit of the favorite objects of his fancy and speculation, he has neglected the first and chief object of his creation, the study of man, the noblest work of God. Hence the cause of much, if not of most of the ills that he is doomed to suffer in the flesh; and hence, too, the reason why every successive generation is compelled to reap the hereditary follies of the past, in addition to those of its own creating. Now so long as man continues ignorant of himself, and of those laws which govern the animal economy, so long must he continue to be the subject of physical

disease, suffering, and premature death; and so long as he neglects to acquaint himself with the laws of health, so long will he remain the dupe of artful and ignorant pretenders, and the gormandizer of spurious, patent nostrums, alike injurious to his health and his purse.

“The true secret of wisdom lies in self-knowledge” and

My object in the preceding remarks, has been, to direct the attention of the reader to his only safeguard against disease, and this safeguard, as will readily be perceived, consists in his knowledge of himself.

I am aware that I have advanced some hypotheses, which vary from long cherished opinions. Still I am confident that they are susceptible of a clear demonstration on physiological principles; that facts warrant the assertions, and that they will be found true on investigation.

In calling your attention to the subject of Bathing, it will be necessary, in order to faithfully represent this powerful agent in the preservation of health, first to give a brief description of the office and functions of the skin, through the medium of which its benefits are extended to the subjacent textures.

The direct and sympathetic relations existing between the skin and the internal organs, render its functions more numerous and complicated than those of any other organ in the animal structure. There is, in fact, no part of the human system upon which the whole is so entirely and necessarily dependent, and which consequently requires so strict attention in obedience to the laws of health, as that which forms the natural envelope of the living fabrick.

This membranous covering, which serves to bind together and protect from external injuries, the more delicate textures, which it incloses, consists of three layers of membrane, each of which, in obedience to a law of the animal economy, has a function peculiar to itself.

The cuticle, or scarf-skin which is the external layer, and is that raised in blisters, is an insensible, inorganic membrane, destitute of nerves and blood-vessels, and is placed as a physical defence against friction and injurious to the delicate nervous expansion upon the true skin, from external objects. This external lamina is constantly wearing off, and as constantly renewed by a secretion from the mucous coat, or middle layer, in which resides the coloring matter, which gives the peculiar complexion to the different races of men.

The dermis, *cutis vera*, or true skin, is a firm, elastic membrane, by far the most important of the three, being very highly endowed with the principle of life; so much so, indeed, that it is impossible to puncture it with the point of a needle, without exciting pain and drawing blood. It is not only the seat of sensation and of touch, but it is the instrument of a very important exhalation; "the right condition, or disturbance of which," says Dr. Combe, "is a most powerful agent in the preservation, or subversion of the general health."

"To understand the important purposes of the true skin," continues the same author, "we must distinguish between its constituent parts, and consider it, in virtue of each of them, 1st, as an exhalant of waste

matter from the system; 2d, as a joint regulator of the heat of the body; 3d, as an agent of absorption; and 4th, as the seat of sensation and touch.

“Besides performing the mechanical office of a shield to the parts beneath, the skin is admirably fitted, by the great supply of blood which it receives, for its use as a secreting and excreting organ. The whole animal system is in a state of constant decay and renovation; and while the stomach and alimentary canal take in new materials, the skin forms one of the principal channels by which the altered, or useless particles are eliminated from the body.

“Every one knows that the skin perspires, and that checked perspiration is a powerful cause of disease and of death; but very few have any just notion of the real extent and influence of this exhalation. When the body is overheated by exercise in warm weather, a copious sweat soon breaks out, which, by carrying off the superfluous heat, produces an agreeable feeling of coolness and refreshment. This is the higher and more obvious degree of the function of exhalation; but, in the ordinary state, the skin is constantly giving out a large quantity of waste materials, by what is called *insensible* perspiration; a process which is of great importance to the preservation of health; and which is called insensible, because the exhalation, being in the form of vapour, and carried off by the surrounding air, is invisible to the eye.”

Many experiments have been made by philosophers and physicians, among the most successful of whom, were Sanctorius, Lavoisier and Seguin, to ascertain the quantity of transpiration which is formed in a giv-

en time. And according to the lowest estimate of Lavoisier and Seguin, we find the skin endowed with the important charge of removing from the system about twenty ounces of waste matter every twenty-four hours. These experiments were, of course made upon subjects in a state of perfect health, and admitting their results to be correct, we may cease to wonder why checked perspiration should prove so detrimental to health; because for every twenty-four hours during which such a state continues, we must either have twenty ounces of useless and hurtful matter accumulating in the body, or this important function of the skin must be performed by some of the other excreting organs, which obviously cannot happen without disturbing their regularity and well being.

Cold is acknowledged to be the prolific mother of diseases, and it operates upon the human system chiefly by its power of contracting the minute blood-vessels distributed to the skin *ad infinitum*, whereby the great quantity of blood that circulates upon the surface of the body, is propelled inwardly, and is thrown upon the internal organs, some of which must obviously become surcharged, and unless timely relief is afforded, inflammation ensues.

Many people wonder at the consequences often resulting from exposures to cold, or to currents of cold air applied to the skin in a state of sensible perspiration; but were they taught as they ought to be, the structure and uses of their own bodies, they would rather wonder that similar consequences did not always follow such exposures; since in addition to the accumulation of blood upon the internal viscera, the

cutaneous transpiration is thereby checked and this waste and virulent matter, which it is the office of the skin to discharge from the body, is carried the rounds of the circulation, diffusing itself into every part of the system and poisoning the very fountain of life. Add to these the deleterious properties of marsh miasmata and other noxious effluvia that are introduced into the system by cutaneous absorption from the surrounding atmosphere, at particular seasons of the year, and you have combined the principal causes which operate in the production of colds, catarrh, influenza, inflammation of the abdominal viscera, and of most fevers that occur in this northern climate—and the *exciting* cause of most, if not all cases of pulmonary consumption, the fell destroyer of our race, to which its tens of thousands annually fall victims.

The sympathy and reciprocity of action existing between the skin and internal organs, is fairly demonstrated by the efforts which the lungs and mucous surfaces make to perform the office of the former when its functions have been suspended; and *visa versa*; when the function of respiration has been suddenly suspended, the blood immediately rushes to, or is detained in the capillary vessels upon the surface of the body, as though it would seek a communication with the atmospherical air, and thereby receive its accustomed oxygenation through the pores of the skin. And this similarity of function is, also, clearly exhibited in the profuse sweating that generally accompanies the last stages of pulmonary consumption, when the transpiration of the lungs has become suspended by their extensive disorganization.

But perhaps a more familiar example is shown in obstructions of the liver, where the bile, being obstructed in its natural passage, becomes diffused throughout the system and seeks an outlet through the skin.

The local disturbances which follow as a consequence of deranged functions of the skin, occur only when one organ is rendered weaker than the rest, as often happens, from constitutional or accidental causes; in which case the health of the debilitated organ is, of course, the first to suffer. In one individual the stomach may be the organ most seriously affected, in another the mucous surfaces, generally, may become irritated and occasion those obstinate and often fatal bowel complaints, so common among children and not of unfrequent occurrence among adults, at particular seasons of the year; but the centre of this secondary disturbance is most frequently in the lungs, giving rise to catarrh or common cold, or perhaps even to acute inflammation. When, on the other hand, all these organs are in a state of vigorous health, a temporary increase of function takes place in them, and relieves the system, without leading to any local disorder, and the skin itself speedily resumes its activity and restores the balance between them.*

From the preceding brief description of the structure and functions of the skin, it will be perceived that it was given to man, not only for the purpose of binding together the subjacent textures, and for feeling in a general sense, but for perspiration, absorption, and particularly for *touch*, in which he excels all other animals, and which resides principally in the *tips of*

*Combe.

the fingers. Man was intended for examining, reasoning, forming a judgment, and acting accordingly; he was fitted by this sense to examine accurately the properties of surrounding bodies, not capable of being examined by his other senses. This, it is said, was one among other reasons, why he was made erect, that the points of his fingers should not be made callous, or less sensible, *by walking on them.**

We are now, I trust, prepared to see how much of our health and I may say of our happiness, depends upon the possession of self-knowledge, and our consequent attention to the state and condition of that organ which is the medium of sensation, and the most extensive receptacle of external impressions.

In the following remarks I shall endeavour to show the importance and efficacy of Bathing, not only as a remedial agent, but as a salutary means of preserving health; and in order to excite that interest in the subject which its importance demands, I shall avail myself of historical facts and the opinions of celebrated medical authors in corroboration of my own views in relation to it.

It is truly astonishing to reflect upon the general want of attention to this subject, and the little use that is made of this salutary agent, considering the advantages to be derived from it, as a promoter of cleanliness, and the great variety of diseases incident to the human frame that may be entirely prevented by its timely use.

In the various pursuits and occupations of mankind, their chief and ultimate objects are the attainment of

*Hooper.

health and happiness; for it is a notorious fact, that the number of those who enjoy uninterrupted health, owing to a violation of the laws of their physical organization, is exceedingly diminutive; and as health constitutes one of the three component principles which make up the sum of all human enjoyment, I trust that my humble efforts in directing the attention of the reader to a consideration of this most important, yet simple means of preserving and perpetuating the blessing of health, will not be made entirely in vain.

Baths, with respect to temperature, may be either cold, temperate, or hot; they may be either natural or artificial, simple or medicated, and they may be taken or administered by immersing the body, partially or wholly in water, by showering with the same, or they may be used in the form of vapor. But my limits will permit me to give only a brief, general description of the effects of these different modes of bathing, and of their applicability to individual cases.

It is the Vapor Baths, only, that admit of universal application; and even those may not be used without due caution and discrimination, as it respects duration, and temperature.

Many of the distinctive and characteristic features of those different states of the system to which the cold and hot water baths are particularly applicable, are directly opposed to each other.

The general circumstances of disorder for which cold bathing appears to be of service, according to Dr. Sanders, are a languor and weakness of circulation, accompanied with profuse sweating and fatigue, on very moderate exertion; tremours in the limbs, and

many of those symptoms usually called nervous; where the moving powers are weak, and the mind listless and indolent; but at the same time, where no permanent morbid obstruction, or visceral disease is present. Such a state of body is often the consequence of a long and debilitating sickness, or of a sedentary life, without using the exercise requisite to keep up the activity of the bodily powers. In all these cases, the great object to be fulfilled is, to produce a considerable reaction from the shock of cold water, at the expense of as little heat as possible; and when the cold bath does harm it is precisely where the powers of the body are too languid to bring on reaction, and the chilling effects remain unopposed.

The most salutary consequence which follows the proper use of this powerful remedy, is the production of a free and general perspiration. It is this circumstance that appears to give so much advantage to a general affusion of cold water in fevers, in preference to any partial application.* But whatever may be the complaint for which it is resorted to, every cold bath applied to the whole body ought to be of short duration, since all the advantage depends upon the *first impression* which is made on the skin and nerves. The immersion ought always to be sudden, not only because it is less felt than when we enter the water slowly and timorously, but likewise because the effect of the first impression is uniform over the whole body, and the blood in this manner is not propelled from the lower to the upper extremities.†

The shower bath, which is a species of cold bath,

*Hooper's Med. Dict. †Invalid's Oracle.

is often attended with particular advantage. 1st, from the sudden contact of the water, which in the common cold bath is only momentary, but, which, in the shower bath may be prolonged, repeated, or modified at pleasure: and 2d, from the head and chest which are exposed to some inconvenience and danger in the common bath, being here effectually secured, by receiving the first shock of the water.

The hot bath, including a temperature from 93 to 98 deg. Far. has a peculiar tendency to bring on a state of repose, to alleviate any local irritations, and thereby induce sleep. It is, upon the whole, a safer remedy than the cold bath, and more particularly applicable to very weak and irritable constitutions, whom the shock produced by cold immersion would overpower, and who have not sufficient vigor of circulation for an adequate reaction. For *general* use, the tepid or warm bath is much more suitable than the cold bath, especially in winter, and for those who are not robust and full of animal heat. Where the constitution is not sufficiently vigorous to secure reaction after the cold bath, as indicated by a warm glow over the surface, its use inevitably does harm. A vast number of persons are in this condition; while, on the contrary, there are few who do not derive evident advantage from the regular use of the tepid bath, and still fewer who are hurt by it.

When the health is good and the bodily powers are sufficiently vigorous, the cold bath during summer, and the shower bath in winter, may serve every purpose required from them. But it should never be forgotten, that they are too powerful in their agency to be

used with safety by *every one*, especially in cold weather. In proportion as cold bathing is influential in the restoration of health when judiciously used, it is hurtful when resorted to without discrimination. Invalids, therefore, ought never to have recourse to it without the sanction of their professional advisers.

A person in sound health and strength may take a bath at any time, except immediately after meals. But the *best* time for valetudinarians is in the forenoon or evening, from one to three hours after a moderate meal. And if the bath be a cold one some exercise should follow its use; whilst, as a general rule, all active exertion ought to be avoided for an hour or two after using the warm or tepid bath. That the latter is a safe and valuable preservative of health in ordinary circumstances, and an active remedy in disease, is most certain; and instead of being dangerous by causing liability to cold, it is when well managed, so much the reverse of it, that it has been used much and successfully for the express purpose of diminishing such liability in persons of delicate chests; and if the practice were more general, the mortality from pulmonary consumption would doubtless be proportionably diminished.

In those manufacturing establishments where warm water is always obtainable, it would be a very great advantage to all concerned, to have baths erected and to require the operatives to use them. Not only would they be useful in promoting health and cleanliness, but they would, by their refreshing and soothing influence diminish the craving for stimulus which has heretofore led so many to the gin-shops; and at the

same time calm the irritability of mind so apt to be induced by excessive labor. Where the trade or occupation is dirty, as many trades necessarily are, it is needless to say how conducive to health and comfort a temperate or vapor bath would be on quitting it for the day.*

If these hints should be the means of turning the attention of our manufacturers in this place to a due consideration of this important subject, we should then have the pleasure of witnessing bathing establishments connected with every individual corporation, instead of a total neglect of this salutary agent in the preservation of health; and we should see, also, more florid, and fewer pale and sickly countenances than we now do, and hear less of those perplexing chronic ailments from which few are now exempt.

I have remarked that the vapor baths alone, admit of universal application, by which I wish to be understood that they are applicable to all cases in which baths of any kind are admissible, combining as they do, the properties, and when judiciously administered, producing the effects of both the warm, and the cold baths. Their use, says Dr. Combe, is attended by the very best effects, particularly in chronic complaints; and there can be no question that their action is chiefly on the skin, and through its medium on the nervous system. As a means of determining to the surface, promoting cutaneous exhalation, and equalizing the circulation, they are second to no remedy now in use. The prevalent fear of catching cold, which deters many from using the vapor bath, is founded on

*Combe's Physiology.

a false analogy between its effects and those of profuse perspiration from exercise or illness. The latter weakens the body, and by diminishing the power of reaction, renders it susceptible of injury from sudden changes of temperature. But the effect of the vapor bath, properly administered, is very different. When not too warm or too long continued, it increases instead of exhausting the strength; and, by exciting the vital action of the skin, gives rise to a power of reaction which enables it to resist cold better than before. This fact is well exemplified in Russia and the north of Europe, where, in the depth of winter, it is not uncommon for the natives to rush out of a vapor bath and roll themselves in the snow, and be refreshed by so doing; whereas, were they to attempt such a practice after severe perspiration from exercise, they would inevitably suffer. It is the previous stimulus given to the skin by the vapor bath which is the real safeguard against the coldness of the snow.*

The vapor bath is thus calculated to be extensively useful, both as a preservative of health and as a remedial agent. Many a cold and many a rheumatic attack arising from checked perspiration, or long exposure to the weather might be nipped in the bud by its timely use. In chronic affections, not only of the skin itself, but of the internal organs with which the skin sympathises most closely, the judicious application of the vapor bath is productive of great relief. Even in chronic pulmonary complaints, it is, according to the oriental physicians, not only safe, but very serviceable; particularly in those affections of the

*Combe's Physiology.

mucous membrane which resemble consumption in so many of their symptoms.

Bathing is a practice of antiquity. The people of the East were ever accustomed to it, and have continued the habit to the present time; their methods being perfectly conformable to those of the Greeks and Romans.

But it must be owned, that in spite of all the advantages derived from the habitual use of baths with respect to health and cleanliness, the moderns, if we except the Orientals and the Turks, have until lately very much neglected to employ them. There appears, however, at the present day, to be a manifest inclination, even in this country where bathing has been almost totally neglected, to adopt the practice of the ancients; and this disposition is evinced exactly in proportion as people become acquainted with the science of physiology and the wants of the physical constitution. It is, therefore, not beyond the reach of probability, that bathing may eventually come into general use in this country. Should that epoch ever arrive, and the people become wise enough to substitute baths for physic, and withal, to manifest a due regard for that "supreme organ of existence," the stomach,* they may then bid defiance to disease, and barter away their Doctors for sound health. Among the ancients, bathing was used as familiarly as eating, or

*From want of submission to the salutary rule of temperance in eating, as many men dig the grave with their teeth as with the tankard; drunkenness is deplorably destructive, but her demurer sister gluttony destroys a hundred to her one.

sleep. Among the Turks, also, with whom the practice has been more easily preserved, on account of its connection with religious worship, it is used as a luxury and is resorted to as common as their meals; and in every town, and even village, there is said to be a public bath, for those who have not the convenience of private baths attached to their own houses.

Baths have been common in Russia from time immemorial. They are described by Nester so long ago as the eleventh century, precisely in their present form. The bath, is said to be a necessary of life so indispensable to the common people of Russia, that they frequent it as often as possible, well or ill, and without any particular occasion, once a week at least. Mr. Tooke, in his "View of the Russian Empire," informs us that the common Russians, in general, use but few medicines; supplying their place in all cases by the vapor bath, a practice universal among them, and which has a decided influence on the whole physical state of the people. The same writer adds, that without doubt, the Russians owe their longevity, their robust state of health, their little disposition to certain mortal diseases, and their happy and cheerful temper, mostly to these baths, though climate, aliment, and habits of living likewise contribute their share.

The great lord Chancellor Bacon, and other sagacious observers of nature and of mankind, have lamented, and certainly not without cause, that the practice of bathing has fallen into disuse among modern nations; and have expressed an anxious wish that it might again be revived. In fact, when we consider, says Mr. Tooke, that the old physicians so early in-

troduced into their practice, this remedy of nature's own invention, and employed it with such great success; when we recollect that Rome for 500 years had no physicians, but only baths, and that to this day many nations cure almost all their maladies merely by baths, we cannot avoid regarding the dismission of them as the epoch of a grand revolution, which has been wrought in the physical state of the human race, in one quarter of the world. The natural perspiration, the most important of all excretions, must, *a priori*, go on better in a body constantly kept moist by bathing. Many impurities that privily lay in us the train to tedious and dangerous distempers are thus removed in time, before they poison the blood and juices. All exanthematic diseases are abated by bathing, and consequently the small pox; and if this dreadful disorder be actually less fatal in Russia than in other countries, this phenomenon need not be attributed to any other cause than vapor baths.*

The following remarks of the celebrated Dr. Andrew Combe, on the subject of the warm bath, are strictly and literally true, also, in relation to the vapor bath. He says that "many imagine the tepid and warm bath to be weakening, but experience shows that they are so only when abused. When not too warm, and not prolonged beyond fifteen or twenty minutes, the tepid bath may be employed daily with perfect safety and advantage by persons in health; while invalids, whose condition requires its use, are often strengthened by a much longer and equally frequent immersion. I have seen it resorted to" says he "for

*Russ's Cyclopaedia.

an hour daily, for months in succession, by nervous invalids, with much benefit to health and strength; and in France it is employed to an infinitely greater extent. At the immense hospital of Salpetriere at Paris, and also at Charenton, M. Esquirol has for many years directed it to be extensively used for two, three, and even five hours a day, and with excellent effect. When I visited the hospital for the insane at Charenton, and M. Esquirol's admirable private asylum at Ivry in September, 1831, that gentleman spoke to me in very strong terms of the benefits resulting from the practice, and declared that he had ever found it, when used with ordinary prudence, a safe and valuable remedy."

In speaking of the efficacy of ablutions and frictions to the skin, Dr. Combe says, "if one tenth of the persevering attention and labor bestowed to so much purpose upon brutes, in rubbing down and currying their skins, were bestowed upon the human race in keeping themselves in good condition, and a proper attention were paid to diet and clothing, colds, nervous diseases, and stomach complaints would cease to form so large an item in the catalogue of human miseries. Man studies the nature of other animals, and adapts his conduct to their constitution; himself alone he continues ignorant of and neglects. He considers himself as a being of a superior order, and not subject to the laws of organization which regulate the functions of the inferior animals; but this conclusion is the result of ignorance and pride, and not a just inference from the premises on which it is ostensibly founded."

The same writer adds that "he has had extensive

experience in his own person, of the connexion between the state of the skin and the health of the lungs; and can therefore speak with some confidence as to the accuracy of his observations, and the benefit to be derived from attending to the condition of the skin in chronic pulmonary complaints. Many affections of a consumptive character are preceded or begin by a deficiency of vital action in the skin and extremities, and a consequent feeling of coldness in the feet and on the surface, and susceptibility of catarrhal affections from apparently inadequate causes, often long before any pressing symptom, directly connected with the lungs, occurs to attract notice

In this state, means systematically directed to restoring the cutaneous circulation will frequently be successful in warding off consumption; and even when the disease is formed, the same means will help to prolong life and relieve suffering, while they will go far to effect a cure in those chronic affections of the bronchial membrane which simulate consumption and are sometimes undistinguishable from it, and which, when mismanaged, are equally fatal."

It may be proper to add, in conclusion that the term medicated baths, which has already been mentioned, implies such as are impregnated with various medicinal substances; such as sulphur and iron from the mineral kingdom, which form valuable substitutes for the natural sulphur and iron baths. Vapor baths may, also, be medicated by passing the steam or vapor through a quantity of aromatic herbs, or any other substances possessing medicinal properties, suitable to be used,

These baths are particularly serviceable in gouty and rheumatic affections, in paralysis, jaundice, scrofula, the whole class of cutaneous diseases, and a variety of other maladies, too numerous to mention. Reason, however, suggests the impropriety of attempting to use or administer them without a previous knowledge of the human system, of the character of diseases, and of the nature and powers of the remedial agents to be employed.

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Besides being the most perfect promoter of cleanliness, and a great luxury to all persons in health, these baths are of superior efficacy as a remedial agent, in all cases where baths of any kind are admissible. Gouty and rheumatic affections, palsy, jaundice, scrofula, almost the whole class of cutaneous diseases, and a multitude of other "ills that flesh is heir to," are removed or mitigated by a timely use of this sovereign and potent medicinal agent.

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In reply to the very common inquiry "are these baths on the Thomsonian plan," the subscriber would simply state that he has no fellowship with the Thomsonian practice; that the vapor bath was in use centu-

ries before Samuel Thomson, the author of the "New Guide to Health," had an existence, and therefore could not, as many have supposed, have originated with him. It is true that the Thomsonians have made use of steam or vapor, in some form, in connexion with their course of practice. It is true, also, that community, in taking cognizance of this species of quackery, have attributed the evils resulting therefrom, almost exclusively to "*steaming*;" whilst it is evident that the benefits which have resulted from the same empyrical practice, are chiefly owing to the use of the vapor bath.

It cannot be denied that some good, as well as much evil has resulted from the Thomsonian practice; and had Thomson and his disciples have confined themselves to a proper and discriminate use of the baths, and of a few of his primitive remedies, in certain chronic complaints evidently requiring the use of stimulants, instead of licensing an indiscriminate use of an active and virulent poison, and of the most powerful and exciting stimulants, by the merest charlatans and ignoramuses, it might not have been his fate to have witnessed the sad havoc that has been made by his favorite *system*, nor to have out-lived the name of his own *theory*.

It is hardly necessary to add that the vapor bath is becoming quite popular in the principal cities in the Union under the patronage and sanction of the Medical Faculty.

J. W. FORD.

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